

39111 - Bacon



MR. BACON'S

DISCOURSE

AT THE FUNERAL OF

Jehudi Ashmun, Esq.

A

DISCOURSE

PREACHED IN THE

CENTER CHURCH, IN NEW HAVEN, AUGUST 27, 1828,

AT THE FUNERAL OF

JEHUDI ASHMUN, ESQ.

COLONIAL AGENT

OF THE

AMERICAN COLONY OF LIBERIA.

BY LEONARD BACON.

WITH THE ADDRESS AT THE GRAVE;

BY R. R. GURLEY.

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SERMON, &c.



MATTHEW XXVI, 8.

To what purpose is this waste?

THAT incident in the life of our Saviour, from the narrative of which these words are taken,* affords us a beautiful lesson. As Jesus sat at meat in the house of one of his friends, Mary, the sister of Lazarus, came with an alabaster box of precious ointment, and anointed his feet and wiped them with her hair, and brake the box, and poured the ointment on his head, so that the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. And there were some who had indignation among themselves, and said, To what purpose is this waste; for this ointment might have been sold for much and given to the poor. And they murmured against her. But Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye the woman? For she hath wrought a good work upon me. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.

The objector in this case was Judas Iscariot. His narrow mind looked only at the expense of Mary's costly offering;—and why was all this waste? The objection was plausible; to some, at least, of the disciples it seemed valid. Why did our Lord condemn the objection? Why did he speak of

* Compare Matthew xxvi, 6—13; Mark xiv, 3—9; and John xii. 1—8.

this costly expression of affection in terms of so decided praise? It was because he knew and appreciated the object of the sacrifice. The expense, the cost, was all which the mind of the objector fastened on; but the mind of Jesus saw, and his feelings honored, the end for which the expenditure was made. He saw that this profusion was in Mary, simply the expressive exhibition of her warm attachment to her Lord, the indulgence of her humble thankfulness toward the benefactor who at her solicitation, in answer to her faith, had recalled her brother from the imprisonment of death and the decay of the sepulchre. Therefore it was that he rebuked those who would condemn her for extravagance, and commended that deep and disinterested love which prompted an offering so costly.

Now the lesson which this incident affords us, is, that the spirit of christian piety, so far from discouraging, approves the expression, even the costly expression of every disinterested, generous, affectionate feeling. If the feeling is rational in itself, if the expression of the feeling is appropriate and natural, if the indulgence of it is not inordinate, there is nothing in the spirit of christian piety to prompt the murmuring enquiry, "To what purpose is this waste?" Christians need not be Stoics. Our Lord would not obliterate the fine and tender sensibilities of our nature, nor would he have us check their free indulgence. He would indeed have every thought and desire brought into captivity to the obedience of his gospel. He would indeed have love to God and love to man, in every soul, the deepest and most controlling principles of action. But at the same time he would give its due place, and allow its proper indulgence and natural expression to every tender, or noble, or disinterested feeling. So beautiful, even in its incidental bearings, is that religion which breathes peace and good will to man, which reconciles the sinner to his God, and which promises to renovate the aspect of this miserable world.

I have chosen the text however, not for the sake of discoursing on the particular incident in connection with which it is spoken; or for the sake of showing that he who commended Mary's ardent gratitude, who had himself wept at the grave of Lazarus, and who still feels for our infirmities, will not forbid our tears at such a time as this; but rather because the words suggest a topic of reflection which seems more especially consistent with the proprieties of this occasion. The man whose remains are before us, has died a victim to his labors and privations and afflictions under the burning sun of Africa. During the few days which he has spent among us, he has won the affection and veneration of all who have had the opportunity of seeing his noble qualities. And if we were to speak his eulogy on this occasion—as well we might—it would probably excite in some minds not familiar with the exalted end for which he labored unto death, the complaint, To what purpose is this waste? Why is it that such a man who might have been useful here at home; who might have labored successfully in the routine of a profession; who might have risen to wealth, or to some high and honorable station, in his native land; whose mind, gifted as it was with vigorous intellect, might have enlarged the boundaries of science; whose lips, rich as they were with the power of expression, might have been eloquent at the bar, or in the halls of legislation, or in the house of God;—Why is it that such a man has toiled and suffered under the uncongenial climate of the tropics, and has fallen in the vigor of his maturity a martyr to his zeal? How can it be right for good and valuable men thus to squander their own lives?

Such a feeling, if it exists in any mind, it is my wish to meet, and if possible to remove. When a man like him whose spirit has now gone to his reward, is taken from the world, the loss *is great*. When such a life is sacrificed in the advancement of whatever undertaking, it is a great ex-

penditure. But is it true that life is never to be hazarded? Is it true that valuable lives are never to be sacrificed? Must every undertaking, however vast or noble, be given over, as soon as it is found that lives must be lost for the attainment of the object? Will you say that because Andrus, and Sessions, and Holton and Ashmun have given up their lives for Africa, therefore the enterprise in which such men have died must be abandoned, and Africa must be left to be the abode of ignorance, and cruelty, and misery, till the world shall end? Will you say that because Heber and Middleton, because our own Hall and Newel have perished from their labors in the midst of life, beneath the sultry sky of India;—will you say that because Martyn's career was brief as it was bright, and because our Parsons and Fiske lay down in their prime to sleep among the sepulchres of the prophets, and because every missionary who goes into a heathen land goes to peril, and too probably, to an early grave;—will you argue that therefore the thick gloom of paganism must rest upon the world forever, without another effort to let in the blessed light of heaven? Do you tell us, It is wrong that lives so valuable should be thus thrown away? Do you ask us, To what purpose is this waste?

Look now at this principle of yours. It is just the principle that every cause in which valuable lives are lost must be abandoned. And what a principle is this. How many valuable lives have been lost in the cause of liberty? How many and how venerated are the names of patriots who have hazarded their lives and lost them for the deliverance of their country? Have these lives been squandered? How often has a barrier of living men turned back from some threatened land the terrors of invasion. Thousands perished in the conflict, all valuable to their country; and each in his own circle the object of intense interest, as a husband, or a father, or a brother, or a son. Place yourself on some such battle-field of freedom; think *for what* the

blood of patriots was there poured forth like water ; think of ten thousand homes preserved from violation and from flames ; think of the peace and industry, the intelligence and happiness which follow in the train of freedom ; and will you—with the results as well as the expense before you—*can* you say that all those lives were wasted ? Who can contradict that universal feeling of mankind which leads them to embalm the memory of such a conflict ; and which makes the names of fallen patriots a watch-word and a treasure for their country ? Who will say that our fathers of the revolution, when Warren had fallen on the heights of Charlestown, and Montgomery had perished at Quebec, ought to have folded their arms, and abandoned their cause, and submitted to the claims they had begun to resist, because valuable lives were sacrificed ? Yet this you must say, if you will be consistent.

How many valuable lives were sacrificed in the enterprise of planting the colonies which have grown up into this great republic ? Ought the Puritans to have given over their undertaking in despair as soon as it was seen that lives must be lost in colonizing the inhospitable wilderness ? Recal to your memory that first, long, perilous winter. Place yourself in thought on the rock of Plymouth. Look round on the snow-clad hills, and see the one hundred wretched exiles planting themselves there without a shelter from the storms and cold, and with nothing to sustain them but their hope in God ; see them perishing by famine and exposure and disease ; and then, when half their number are in their graves, and those very graves are carefully hidden that they may hide their growing weakness from the enemies that roam the wilderness around them—then ask them, To what purpose is this waste ? Tell them, You are squandering your valuable lives, your enterprise is full of peril, and must be abandoned ; for will you think of building here the altars of your faith, at such expense as this ? Tell them, Back, go back to

England ; be submissive to her hierarchy and her king ; bow down like Issaehar between your burthens ; bear as meekly as you can the yoke from which you have so rashly and so vainly fled ; and leave this wilderness to be a wilderness forever. This should be your counsel in such an emergency, if you will be consistent. But, blessed be God, they took not counsel of such counsellors as you. While their number was dwindling away so rapidly, and each expected to be buried in some secret grave to-morrow, they never thought of asking the desponding question, 'To what purpose ? Sufferings they could endure ; death they could bear ; but the end they were pursuing they could not relinquish. They valued their enterprise too highly to count their own lives dear in the comparison. Pursuing such an end, they held all things else in little estimation, and encountered death as being far, far better than despair. Hundreds on hundreds died by disease and privation and war, in the attempt to colonize New-England. Ask you, 'To what purpose was this waste ? Say you that this was wrong ?—that those lives were thrown away ? Look over our green hills and quiet vales ; mark that rich aspect of peace and happiness and virtue that overspreads the land ; listen to the sounds of industry and commeree ; above all, hark to the music of our sabbath bells as their thousand notes go up mingling in the air of heaven ; and say, if you can, that those lives were thrown away, and that because the enterprise was full of peril and of death, it should have been abandoned.

In other words, it is a mistake to suppose that there are not some objects for the attainment of which men may sacrifice their lives, and at the same time deserve on that very account our highest veneration. He whose mind fastens only on the expense, may think that the expense is wasted ; and till his mind can understand, and his heart appreciate, the end for which the expenditure is made ; he will deem the sacrifice extravagant. But so thought not Paul and the

goodly company of the Apostles, when, in obedience to the "heavenly vision," they gave themselves to toils and sufferings, and counted not their own lives dear unto themselves, and died to propagate the gospel of their Lord. So thought not the noble army of the martyrs, whose blood has been shed,

" In confirmation of the noblest claim,
Our claim to feed upon immortal truth,
To walk with God, to be divinely free,
To soar, and to anticipate the skies."

So thought not he who is our perfect example as well as our Redeemer,—he who said, Whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it,—he who died on Calvary, suspended between the earth and heavens a spectacle of suffering and death to men and angels. He might have held back from the suffering of death; but he had seen the ruin of a world, and he most freely died for its deliverance. His life was sacrificed—and to what purpose! The anthems of eternity are telling to what purpose. On that theme the harps of angels are laboring. And that theme—the purpose for which the Son of God was made a sacrifice—will forever swell in grandeur till the ages of eternity are numbered.

Our departed friend has died a victim to his labors and sufferings in the cause of benevolence. Several years ago, after having watched for some time with an active and growing interest, the progress of the measures which had been commenced to relieve this nation from the pressure of a deadly evil, and to bestow on Africa the blessedness of freedom and religion, he gave himself to the work in which he has now died. He reached the field of his labors, at a time*

* August, 1822.

when the Colonists had just been removed from the unfortunate location to which treachery had at first conducted them, and were taking possession of the newly purchased territory of Liberia. He found the few colonists alone, not a single white man there, the only surviving Agent having just before embarked in ill health for the United States. He found them almost without houses to protect themselves from the rains of their inclement season, which was then at its height, much less able to afford shelter for the new emigrants who had accompanied him. He found the establishment just ready to sink in disorder and dismay. The settlers were almost defenceless. The native princes, who had sold them the territory with the treacherous intention that they should not settle there, were threatening to destroy them, and were forming combinations for that purpose. In such an emergency it was, that he came to a work entirely new. He had been educated for the work of preaching the gospel. He had been a teacher in a literary institution. He was still a young man. And now he had come to place himself at the head of an unorganized, feeble, heterogeneous community. He was to act the Legislator;—he was to form and put in operation, a system of government; he was to sway the minds of this unformed mass of human beings, and mould them into unity; he was to make them freemen, and habituate them to the business of governing themselves. At the same time he must act the Soldier;—he must rouse in his little flock of once degraded men, the spirit of manhood and the enthusiasm of self-defence, and he must head them in the conflict. He must act the Engineer;—he must lay out the fortifications of his little city, and superintend their hasty construction; he must take care that the very dwellings—even the temporary huts and shelters of the people—are constructed with reference to security from the enemy, and facility of defence in an assault. All this must be commenced at once, for delay was ruin. And just as all this was

commencing, the fever which attacks almost every man on his first arrival from a temperate to a tropical climate, attacked him and the fifty emigrants who had come with him, with uncommon violence. They were all sick—sick without a physician—sick without any proper shelter from the rains—sick almost without medicines. His own wife, among others, was soon carried to the grave. But for him, and for all, there was no time to relax their efforts. Even in sickness and distress, there could be no respite. Their works must go on; for, daily and nightly, they were expecting that an army of savages would be upon them. While prostrated by disease, in the lucid intervals between the returns of delirium, our friend was compelled to rise from his sick bed, to inspect the condition and progress of these operations, to receive reports, to give out orders, to reanimate the weary and desponding, and to superintend all the affairs of this dismayed and distressed community. All this he did; and when at last the fever had left him in extreme debility, and he was just beginning to recover strength, the danger which they had been so long apprehending, came. About three months after his arrival, when their defences had been only partially completed, and when their entire effective force was thirty-five men and boys, they were attacked at the dawn of day by a force of at least eight hundred armed savages. They were taken by surprise, and the enemy were almost in the midst of them before the alarm was given. By an effort of desperate valor, directed by the extraordinary self-possession and energy of our departed friend, the enemy were driven off, and the settlement on which were suspended so many hopes of humanity and religion was delivered. A few days afterwards, while the wounded were still helpless, and the well were exhausted with constant fatigue and watching and alarm, the enemy returned with redoubled numbers and redoubled rage for their destruction; and again, by a valor and

energy which would do honor to the history of any man or any people, they were repulsed, and utterly defeated.*

I have thus described the commencement of his labors and sufferings in Africa, because there is no other way in which I could so well describe his character: inasmuch as it is only by what a man has done, that we can ever distinctly understand what he has been. And what sort of character it was that could act thus in circumstances such as these, it is not difficult to divine. Let me say then, that the same energy, the same self-possession and promptitude, the same exhaustless diligence, the same vigor and quickness of intellectual power, the same courage amid difficulties and dangers, have been exhibited in all his labors there. The establishment which he found on the brink of extinction, he left in prosperity and peace. The little colony which he found defenceless, weak and trembling with dismay, he left so strengthened, as to be safe against any probable attack by land or sea. The people whom he began to rule when they were few, unorganized, and disunited, he has successfully trained to habits of discipline, and taught to enjoy the blessings of rational liberty and real independence. And how well he has governed that people, how happy he has made them, how he has drawn their affections round him, their grief at his departure can testify. One of their own number, in whose hands our friend, on leaving the colony, placed the administration of affairs, thus speaks of the occasion of his embarkation for his native country. "The Colonial Agent, went on board the brig Doris, March 26, 1828, escorted by three companies of the military, and when taking leave he delivered a short address which was truly affecting. Never, I suppose were greater tokens of respect shown by any community on taking leave of their head. At least two thirds of the inhabitants of Monrovia, men, women

* See Appendix, Note A.

and children, were out on this occasion ; and nearly all parted from him with tears. In my opinion, the hope of his return in a few months, alone enabled them to give him up. He is indeed dear to this people, and it will be a joyful day when we are permitted again to see him." Ah that day ! What grief will be theirs, when they learn that they shall see his face no more.

Nor were this man's moral and social traits of character, inferior to his intellectual qualities. Distinguished as he was, for power and comprehensiveness of intellect, for rapidity of conception, for versatility of genius, for skill in the management of men : and for boldness and energy of action, he was no less marked by those traits of character, which command our affection or secure our confidence. A mildness, and suavity, and affectionateness of disposition, and a disinterestedness which felt for all as for himself, was blended with that decision and energy, which we have already noticed. A patience under pain and trouble, a meek fortitude of spirit, which, instead of sinking under distress, or disappointment, or infirmity, is humbled indeed, but is humbled only to rise more majestic—was exemplified in many striking incidents of his history. A dignity of person and manner which arrested the attention of strangers, and which fitted him for command, was not in him inconsistent with a deep and unaffected humility, to which those who saw him on his death-bed, bear ample testimony. And the basis, the grace, and ornament of all these virtues, was his piety—a principle of love and confidence towards God, springing from the knowledge of his Son as Lord and Saviour. It was this which enabled him to bear with patience every burthen ; to resist the struggles of a corrupted nature ; to give himself to labor and to suffering, with the self-denial of a martyr ; and at last to die, with a calm, thoughtful, untrembling confidence, which none but the christian can experience.*

* See Appendix, Note B.

Such was he whose life has been spent, and prematurely exhausted in his zeal for Africa. Do you ask, to what purpose has he died? I would that we could stand together on the promontory of Montserado, and see what has been accomplished by those toils and exposures, which have cost this man his life. Hard by, we might see the island, where, a few years since, there was a market for the slave trade. To that place crowds of captives were brought every year, and there they were sold like beasts of burthen. From that place they were consigned to the unspeakable cruelties of thronged and pestilential slave-ships; and those whom death released not in their passage across the Atlantic, went into perpetual slavery. At that time, this cape was literally consecrated to the devil; and here the miserable natives, in the gloom of the dark forest, offered worship to the evil Spirit. All this was only a few years ago. And what see you now? The forest that had crowned the lofty cape for centuries, has been cleared away; and here are the dwellings of a civilized and intelligent people. Here are twelve hundred orderly, industrious and prosperous freemen; who were once slaves, or in a state of degradation hardly preferable to bondage. Here are schools, and courts of justice, and lo! the spire which marks the temple dedicated to our God and Saviour—strange land-mark to the mariner that traverses the seas of Africa. Here, for a hundred miles along the coast, no slave-trader dares to spread his canvass; for the flag that waves over that fortress, and the guns that threaten from its battlements, tell him that this land is sacred to humanity and freedom. Is all this nothing? Is it nothing to have laid on a barbarous continent, the foundation of a free and christian empire? This is the work in which our friend has died.

But this is not all. I look forward a few years, and I see these results swelling to an importance which may seem incredible to cold and narrow minds. I see those few

and scattered settlements, extending along the coast and spreading through the inland. I see thousands of the oppressed and wretched, fleeing from lands where at the best they can have nothing but the name and forms of freedom, to this new republic, and finding there a refuge from their degradation. I see the accursed slave trade, which for so many ages past, has poured desolation along twelve hundred miles of the African coast, utterly suppressed, and remembered only as an illustration of what human wickedness can be. I see the ancient wilderness, like our own wide forests of the west, vanishing before the march of civilized and Christian man. I see towns and cities rising in peace and beauty, as they rise along our Atlantic shore and on the borders of our rivers. I see fair villages, and quiet cottages, and rich plantations, spreading out where now in the unbroken wilderness, the lion couches for his prey. I see the pagan tribes, catching the light of civilization, and learning from the lips of christian teachers, to exchange the bondage of their superstitions, for the blessed freedom of the gospel. I see churches, schools and all the institutions of religion and science, adorning Africa as they adorn the country of the pilgrims. I hear from the mountains, and the valleys, and along all the yet undiscovered streams of that vast continent, the voice of christian worship and the songs of christian praise. In all those scenes of beauty or of gladness, I see, and in all those accents of thanksgiving, I hear, to what purpose this servant of God poured out his noble soul in his labors of love.

Who asks us, To what purpose is this waste? To what purpose! Thousands and thousands of the exiled sons of Africa, going back from lands of slavery, to enjoy true freedom in the rich and lovely land which God has given them, shall one day answer in their shouts of joy. To what purpose! Africa, delivered from her miseries, her chains thrown off, her spirit emancipated from the power of darkness, ri-

sing up in strength and beauty like a new-born angel from the night of chaos, and stretching out her hands to God in praise, shall one day answer, to what purpose this martyr of benevolence has lived and died.

Is there not then blessed *consolation* blended with the affliction of his death? What though he has died in the midst of life? What though he has died away from the endearments of home, away from the parting embraces of parents, and kindred, and early friends? Is not such a death better than any inferior life? What parent would exchange the memory of such a departed son, for the embrace of any living one? Who would not rather that his brother or his friend had lived such a life, and died so nobly for so noble ends, than that he were still living, and living for no such exalted purpose? Is not that life longest which best answers life's great end? Is that life short which has accomplished great results?

"Can death come
To him untimely who is fit to die?"

We may indeed weep when such a mind departs from the world which its labors have blessed. We may weep when such hopes of bleeding humanity are extinguished. But shall not triumph mingle with our tears? Shall not emotions of praise temper and alleviate our sorrow? He is not dead, but sleepeth. More; he is not dead to usefulness. His works still live. The light which he has kindled shall cheer nations yet unborn. His memory shall never die. Years and ages hence, when the African mother shall be able to sit with her children, under the shade of their native cocoa, without trembling in fear of the manstealer and murderer, she will speak his name with words of thankfulness to God; and as she tells them the story of his devoted labors, and his early death, she will teach them to trace back their happiness, their advancing intelligence, their very safety, to the

remote agency, under God, of the man around whose bier, it is now our lot—our privilege let us say, to mingle our tears.

His *example* shall speak. There have been men whose names are way-marks; whose examples, through successive ages, stir the spirits of their fellow men with noble emulation. What has been done for God, and for the souls of men, and for the cause of wretched human nature by the luster which gathers around the name of DAVID BRAINERD. How many lofty spirits has the simple history of his toils and sorrows kindled and roused to kindred enterprise. Other names there are, which beam from age to age with the same glory. HOWARD, CLARKSON, SWARTZ, MILLS,—what meaning is there in such names as these. Our departed friend will add another to that brilliant catalogue. He takes his place

“ Amid th’ august and never dying light
Of constellated spirits who have gained
A name in heaven by power of heavenly deeds.”

Let us praise God for the light of his example, which shall never be extinguished, and which, as it beams on us, shall also beam on our children, and our children’s children, moving them to deeds of godlike benevolence.

“ Praise! for yet one more name with power endowed,
To cheer and guide us, onward as we press;
Yet one more image, on the heart bestowed,
To dwell there, beautiful in holiness.”

Who will follow this example? Who is ambitious to win the crown which apostles and saints have worn in triumph? Who would win the crown of martyrdom? Do I speak to none among the young, who is willing to hazard his life, and to give it up, if need be, for God, and for the cause of dying man? Do I speak to none among such as are now looking forward to inquire what course of life, and what sphere of labor they shall choose, into whose mind the light of this

example will enter, to waken a like radiance? Who would live and die in the quiet, the ignoble quiet, of ease and fire-side safety, when he might write his name among the stars, and having fought the good fight, be found at last with the saints and the martyrs of Jesus, who have come out of great tribulation. Who does not feel it to be true in a higher and far purer sense than that in which it was originally spoken,

“One glorious hour of crowded life
Is worth an age without a name.”

But there is another, a plainer application of the example which this servant of God has left us; an application which every one of us may make for himself, and which I hope not one of us, softened as we all are by the touching, melting circumstances of this occasion, will seek to evade. Was it right for this man to wear out his life in the cause of benevolence; and is it right for me, or you, to do nothing in this cause? Do you approve, do you applaud his self-denying efforts, his patience unto death in the work of giving to the oppressed and wretched children of Africa, the blessings of freedom and intelligence, and the better blessings of the gospel; and can you justify yourself in treating with neglect that very enterprise in which he has thus toiled and died? Have you treated that enterprise with neglect? You have felt, perhaps, an interest in it; you have sympathized, perhaps, with the trials and successes of the mighty undertaking. And is this all? What contributions of yours have gone to forward this great work? What have you ever done, while this man was yet alive and toiling at his post of danger, to cheer him under his discouragements, or to advance the end for which he was thus sacrificing all that other men deem valuable? Have you done all that you might have done? Shall I ask, have you done nothing? Can you now say that you will do nothing in future? Can you suppress the determination that henceforth you will do much for Africa;

and thus will show that the mysterious providence which brought this man to die among strangers, and to be buried far from all the objects of his earthly love, was not without an end ?

There is always something in death, and the appendages of death, which arrests attention and awakens serious thought. It throws over the world, and over all our pursuits, a light which judgment, as well as feeling, tells us, is the light of truth. The death of a scoffer or a worldling, fills the mind with terror. To see him hastening to the final moment, to see him dying, to see him dead, then to stand by his coffin and his grave, has, ere now, made hard hearts to quiver with the apprehension of what, in spite of man's forgetfulness or man's contempt, must lie beyond the boundary of time. Who can doubt that such impressions are true; or that to lose sight of them is folly ? The death of a humble christian, makes us feel the value of that faith, which throws the brightness of eternity over the shadows of time, and binds the affections of the soul to heaven. Who doubts that it is wise to act on such impressions ? And is there any thing delusive in the impressions of this occasion ? There is no delusion about death. It is death which scatters all delusion. Ask your own hearts now, what it is for which you ought to live; what recollections you will need to cheer your spirit in the hour of its departure. In times when the delusions of this world are brightest, and most fascinating, your bewildered heart may answer falsely; but when it speaks the words of soberness, the words of serious solemn thought, believe it, for those are the words of truth. What, then, at such a moment as the present, in view of the example of this man, are your impressions of the end for which you ought to live ? Standing by the death-bed, or the coffin, or the grave, of one whose life has been thus devoted to the cause of God, and to the liberty and happiness of man, who does not feel the meanness, the guilt, of living in this world for narrow,

selfish purposes ? Look now at the example of this departed benefactor of his country and the world ; trace in thought his brief career of pain and conflict, opening into early glory ; and if you have not given your whole heart to God ; if you are loving the world, and the things that are in the world ; if you are living to yourself ; be ashamed : for O ! how base a thing is it in man to prostitute to selfish ends, the faculties which God has given him that he may share the purest happiness, and reach the most exalted destiny. Who will be contented then to live for nothing ? Who will hold back from giving up his all to advance the praise of God, and the well-being of the world ?

“ Rouse to some work of high and holy love,
 And thou an angel’s happiness shalt know,—
 Shalt bless the earth while in the world above ;
 The good begun by thee shall onward flow
 In many a branching stream, and wider grow ;
 The seed that in these few and fleeting hours,
 Thy hands unsparing and unwearied sow,
 Shall deck thy grave, with amaranthine flowers,
 And yield thee fruits divine in heaven’s immortal bowers.”

ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE GRAVE, BY R. R. GURLEY,

SECRETARY OF THE AMERICAN COLONIZATION SOCIETY.

IT seems proper, that, in the name of the American Colonization Society, I should, on this occasion, express sincere and heartfelt thanks to those present, for the many kind attentions, and the very tender sympathy, which was shown to our excellent friend, (and of which no one was more sensible than he,) during the distressing, but alas! too brief period, since his arrival. Let me assure you, christian friends, that this kindness, and this sympathy, will not be forgotten; that while you enjoy the sweet recollections of having soothed the last hours of an invaluable man, ten thousand hearts will bless you, and the name of your beautiful city be pronounced, even on a distant continent, with the feelings and in the tones of affection. Believe me, the time will come, when Africa shall send forth her pilgrims, to shed their tears, and lay their offerings upon this grave of the MARTYR to her Liberties.

WE have come to the burial of no ordinary man. I cannot now, if I could at any time, pronounce his Eulogy, and shall only attempt, in the few words I shall say of him, to express, simply and briefly, the conclusions of my own understanding, resulting from a long and intimate acquaintance with his character. He possessed a commanding and comprehensive intellect, a courage which Rome would have honored, a disinterestedness which would have been venerated, even in apostolic days, and a zeal which consumed him by giving light. It is now more than six years, since he be-

came, voluntarily, an exile from his friends and his country, that he might plant the seeds of civilization, and christian truth, in the moral desert of Africa. He arrived at a moment when the hopes of our infant colony were just expiring, and rekindled them. He did this while sick, bereaved and afflicted. He did it, while no light shone upon his way but from the throne of God. He did it, while the waves of misfortune beat against him, with a force which it would seem must have overwhelmed any other mind than his own. But his soul was self-balanced. "He braced his corslet o'er his heart's deep wounds;" nor could danger or suffering disturb the serenity, or break the fortitude of his spirit. He "shook despondence from his soul," and rose from the pressure of calamity to the work of his God. It was at this crisis, that on my way to Africa, I found him at the Cape de Verds, (to which Islands he had resorted a short season for the benefit of his health,) and accompanied him thence to our Colony, and enjoyed the high privilege of sharing with him, the effort to give system and order, to the Government of Liberia. At midnight on Cape Montserado, while we alone of the little community awoke, with the majestic ocean breaking at our feet, and heaven shining in beauty and in brightness over us, and the wide spread forest veiled beneath our eye in a gentler and a softer light, it was mine to confer with our now blessed friend, to observe the workings of his quick and powerful mind, while he sought to secure interests, compared with which, he deemed life itself as worthless. The impression then made upon my memory and my heart by his intellectual energy and moral worth can never be effaced. The expectations which were then excited have been more than realized. He has lived to establish the African Colony upon sure foundations. Having defended it with a courage and ability not exceeded, perhaps, in the military exploits of this or any other age, he has shaped and polished its rude mate-

rials, and given to them order, strength, and beauty. He has breathed into the community over which he presided a spirit of activity, industry and enterprise; instructed them in their social duties, their political rights, their christian obligations; checked their irregularities by his decision; and by his integrity and kindness won their hearts. But his influence has extended far beyond the limits of the Colony. He has opened to the poor pagans the ever blessed Gospel, and read to them of justice, mercy, and peace. He has exhibited to them christianity, not as a dead letter, but as a practical principle; as written in the life; as shining forth in sincerity, truth, meekness, purity, charity, and all the virtues which add dignity or worth to character. And the natives, while they have been awed by the terror of his name, have wept in the presence of his goodness.

Africa then must mourn, but not in solitary grief. Thousands throughout this union, regard the cause for which our friend has died, as one of the holiest and the best; and will lament that a main pillar of its strength is fallen. But God reigns, and to his wisdom we bow. This is not the less venerable, because not understood.

Do you inquire what principle regulated and directed the great intellectual powers of our friend, to effect purposes so important as must be attributed to his short life? It was piety. To him may be applied the language, which he selected himself, to illustrate the character of his early predecessor in the agency. "His zeal was ardent, his devotion entire, his hopes elevated to sublimity, and his faith invincible. The love and fear of God, tempered in just proportions, ran through the whole texture of his religious character." There was moral sublimity in his death. But a few hours before his departure, while I sustained him as he sat up, and laid my hand upon his pallid brow, the perspiration flowing from it, and every feature expressing death, he offered up his last supplication in terms as solemn and affecting as ever

fell from mortal lips. A few words, uttered with great distinctness, I have attempted to preserve.

Prayer.—“O my Heavenly Father, look mercifully upon thy afflicted servant, and do not lay upon him that which through weakness he is unable to bear, but let thy grace be sufficient for him. May he desire communion with thee above all other blessings. Bless my friend here present; keep him in thy service, and graciously reward him for all his kindness. O bless all those who have shown a tender concern for me in this place, and all my relatives and friends, and let them never come into condemnation. O bless the colony and that poor people among whom I have laboured. Grant to me, O merciful Father, saving faith, sanctifying faith, and glorify thy great name in my eternal salvation. Grant these blessings, O God of Grace, for the Redeemer’s sake, who suffered for us, and to thee shall praise be given, through all eternity, through all eternity. Amen! Amen!”

And shall we leave this spot without instruction? From this grave comes forth an appeal to us in behalf of Africa. Yes, brother beloved, I trust in God, that from the very dust in which thou art reposing, will emanate an influence which shall neither be arrested or resisted until bleeding, dying Ethiopia shall see the light of redemption, and stretch out her hand to God. Who that has the feelings of a christian, or even of a man, would not cherish that light which so many have gladly died to kindle; which shines over Africa’s sorrows like mercy over a soul in despair; which, unless criminally neglected, must soon spread like the morning on the mountains of Kong, and brighten the Niger’s mysterious waves? Hearts steeled to every sentiment of kindness shall be softened by its influence; where the King of Dahomey enters his palace on a pavement of human skulls, shall stand a Christian Temple; and the words of Death! Death! Death!

which arouse the population of Ashantee, to witness the effusion of human blood, shall be succeeded by humble and holy orisons and hymns of praise. Over this beloved dust, then let us pledge ourselves to do something for Africa. Sixty millions for whom Christ died, our brethren by indissoluble ties, are perishing; can we not, will we not, aid their redemption. It is by imitating the example of the deceased, that we shall pay the best tribute to his memory. To this example, thousands will look as to his imperishable memorial. Let us hope that its influence will excite new zeal in the African cause throughout this nation; that as one man we shall apply our strength to remove the heaviest of our national calamities, and to bless Africa with freedom and the Gospel.

Such a hope, departed brother, we *will* cherish !

“Thou hast left behind,
Powers that will work for thee ! air, earth, and skies ;
There is not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee ! thou has great allies !
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man’s unconquerable mind.”

APPENDIX.

A.

The history of the defence of the settlement on Cape Montserado, in November, 1822, affords so striking an illustration of the intellectual power, the promptitude, the energy, and the heroic bravery by which Mr. Ashmun was distinguished, that I doubt not I shall gratify my readers by extracting from his own "Memoir of the American Colonists," a more minute statement than could be presented in the discourse.

"The plan of defence adopted was to station five heavy guns, at the different angles of a triangle which should circumscribe the whole settlement—each of the angles resting on a point of ground sufficiently commanding to enfilade two sides of the triangle, and sweep a considerable extent of ground beyond the lines. The guns at these stations were to be covered by musket proof triangular stockades, of which any two should be sufficient to contain all the settlers in their wings. The brass piece and two swivels mounted on traveling carriages, were stationed in the center, ready to support the post which might be exposed to the heaviest attack. After completing these detached works, it was in the intention of the Agent, had the enemy allowed the time, to join all together by a paling to be carried quite around the settlement ;—and in the event of a yet longer respite, to carry on, as rapidly as possible, under the protection of the nearest fortified point, the construction of the Martello tower ; which, as soon as completed, would nearly supersede all the other works ; and by presenting an impregnable barrier to the success of any native force, probably become the instrument of a general and permanent pacification. Connected with these measures of safety, was the extension, to the utmost, of the cleared space about the settlement, still leaving the trees and brushwood, after being separated from their trunks, to spread the ground

with a tangled hedge, through which nothing should be able to make its way, except the shot from the batteries.

“ This plan was fully communicated to the most intelligent of the people ; which, in the event of the disability or death of the Agent, they might, it was hoped, so far carry into effect as to ensure the preservation of the settlement.

“ It was an occasion of grateful acknowledgment to that Divine Power under whose heavy hand the Agent was now obliged to bow, that he had been spared to settle these arrangements, and see them in a train of accomplishment, previous to his being laid entirely aside. It was also a source of melancholy satisfaction that he was permitted to watch the fatal progress of disease in an affectionate wife until the last ray of intellectual light was extinguished by its force, two days before her death. Her life had been one of uncommon devotion and self-denial, inspired by a vigorous and practical faith in the Divine Saviour of the world ; and her end, according to his promise, was ineffable peace. She expired on Sunday the 15th of September.”

“ From this date until the first week in November, the Agent continued in an extremely low and dangerous state ; so entirely debilitated in body and mind, as to be nearly incapable of motion, and insensible to every thing except the consciousness of suffering.”

“ On the 7th of November, intelligence was received at the Cape that the last measures had been taken preparatory to an assault on the settlement, which was ordered within four days. The plan of attack being left to the head warriors, whose trade it is to concert and conduct it, was not to be learnt.

“ The Agent was able, with assistance, to inspect the works, and review the little force the same evening. He stated to the people the purport of the intelligence just received ; that ‘ war was now inevitable ; and the preservation of their property, their settlement, their families, and their lives, depended under God, wholly upon their own firmness and good conduct ; that a most important point in the defence of the place, was to secure a perfect uniformity of action, which should assure to every post and individual the firm support of every other. To this end, they must as punctiliously obey their officers as if their whole duty were centered, as it probably

was, in that one point ; and every man as faithfully exert himself, as if the whole defence depended on his single efforts. A coward, it was hoped, did not disgrace their ranks ; and as the cause was emphatically that of God and their country, they might confidently expect his blessing and success to attend the faithful discharge of their duty.'—Every thing was then disposed in order of action, and the men marched to their posts. They lay on their arms, with matches lighted, through the night.

On the 8th, the Agent, by an effort which entirely exhausted his strength, proceeded to examine the obstruction thrown in the way of the avenues to the settlement ; and perceived to his extreme mortification, that the west quarter was still capable of being approached by a narrow path-way, without difficulty ; and that the utmost exertions of the workmen had accomplished only the mounting of the revolving nine pounder at the post ; by which the path was enfiladed ; but that the platform was still left entirely exposed. The eastern quarter was about equally open to the approach of the enemy, but the station was protected by a stockade, and a steep ledge of rocks made the access difficult.

“ Picket guards of four men each were detailed, to be posted 100 yards in advance of each of the stations, through the night. No man was allowed to sleep before the following day, at sun-rise.”

“ Sunday, November 10th. The morning was devoted, as usual to the refreshment of the settlers, none of whom had slept for the 24 hours preceeding. At 1 P. M. all were remanded to their fatigue and other duties, till sun-set ; when the order appointed for the preceeding night was resumed. The women and children attended divine service.

“ Intelligence had reached the agent early in the day, that the hostile forces had made a movement, and were crossing the Montserado river a few miles above the settlement ; but the patrols made no discovery through the day.—At sun-set, however, the enemy again put themselves in motion, and at an early hour of the night, had assembled, as was afterwards learnt, to the number of six to nine hundred men, on the peninsula, where, at the distance of less than half a mile to the westward of the settlement, they encamped till near morning.”

“The most wakeful vigilance on the part of the settlers, was kept up through the night.—But with a fatality which was quite of a piece, with all the hindrances that had impeded the progress of the defences on the western quarter, the picket-guard, in advance of that post, ventured on a violation of their orders, by leaving their station, at the first dawn of day ; at which it was their duty to remain till sun-rise. The native force was already in motion, and followed directly in the rear of the picket-guard. The latter had just rejoined their gun, about which ten men were now assembled ; when the enemy suddenly presenting a front of ten yards in width, at sixty distant, delivered their fire, and rushed forward with their spears to seize the post. Several men were killed and disabled by the first fire, and the remainder driven from their gun without discharging it. Then, retiring upon the center, they threw the reserve there stationed, into momentary confusion ; and had the enemy at this instant, pressed their advantage, it is hardly conceivable that they should have failed of entire success. Their avidity for plunder was their defeat. Four houses in that outskirt of the settlement, had fallen into their hands. Every man on whose savage rapacity so resistless a temptation happened to operate, rushed impetuously upon the pillage thus thrown in his way. The movement of the main body was disordered and impeded ; and an opportunity afforded the Agent, assisted principally by the Rev. Lot Cary, to rally the broken force of the settlers. The two central guns, with a part of their own men, and several who had been driven from the western station, were, with a little exertion, brought back into action, and formed in the line of two slight buildings, thirty yards in advance of the enemy.

“The second discharge of a brass field-piece, double-shotted with ball and grape, brought the whole body of the enemy to a stand. That gun was well served, and appeared to do great execution.”

“The eastern and southern posts, were, from their situation, precluded from rendering any active assistance on the occasion ; but the officers and men attached to them, deserve the highest praise, of doing their duty by maintaining their stations, and thus protecting the flank and rear of the few whose lot it was to be brought to action.

“ A few musketeers with E. Johnson at their head, by passing round upon the enemy’s flank, served to increase the consternation which was beginning to pervade their unwieldy body. In about twenty minutes after the settlers had taken their stand, the front of the enemy began to recoil.” “ The Americans perceiving their advantage, now regained possession of the western post, and instantly brought the long nine to rake the whole line of the enemy. Imagination can scarcely figure to itself a throng of human beings in a more capital state of exposure to the destructive power of the machinery of modern warfare !” “ Their fire suddenly terminated. A savage yell was raised, which filled the dismal forest with a momentary horror. It gradually died away ; and the whole host disappeared. At 8 o’clock, the well known signal of their dispersion and return to their homes, was sounded, and many small parties seen at a distance, directly afterwards, moving off in different directions. One large canoe, employed in reconveying a party across the mouth of the Montserado, venturing within range of the long gun, was struck by a shot, and several men killed.”

“ One woman who had imprudently passed the night in the house first beset by the enemy, had received thirteen wounds, and been thrown aside as dead. Another, flying from her house with her two infant children, received a wound in the head, from a cutlass, and was robbed of both her babes ; but providentially escaped. A young married woman, with the mother of five small children, finding the house in which they slept surrounded by savage enemies, barricadoed the door, in the vain hope of safety. It was forced. Each of the women then seizing an axe, held the irresolute barbarians in check for several minutes longer. Having discharged their guns, they seemed desirous of gaining the shelter of the house previous to reloading. At length, with the aid of their spears, and by means of a general rush, they overcame their heroine adversaries, and instantly stabbed the youngest to the heart. The mother, instinctively springing for her suckling babe, which recoiled through fright, and was left behind, rushed through a small window on the opposite side of the house, and providentially escaped to the lines, unhurt, between two heavy fires. The Agent had caused a return to be made at 9 o’clock, which certainly exhibited a melancholy

statement of the loss sustained by the little company. But it was animating to perceive that none—not even the wounded in their severest sufferings, were dispirited, or insensible of the signal Providence to which they owed the successful issue of their struggle.

“ It never has been possible to ascertain the number of the enemy killed or disabled on this occasion. The only entry made on the subject in the Colonial Journal, is dated November 15th ; and states, ‘ The following circumstances prove the carnage to have been, for the number engaged, great. A large canoe, from which the dead and wounded could be seen to be taken, on its arriving at the opposite side of the Montserado, and which might easily carry twelve men, was employed upwards of two hours in ferrying them over. In this time, not less than ten to twelve trips must have been made. It is also known, that many of the wounded were conveyed away along the south beach, on mats: and that the dead left of necessity in the woods, where many fell, were carried off by their friends every night. But two days ago, twenty-seven bodies were discovered by a party of friendly Condoes employed by the Agent for the purpose. On entering the wood, the offensive effluvia from putrid bodies, is at this time intolerable.’ ”

This battle was followed by a fruitless attempt on the part of Mr. Ashmun to terminate the war by negotiation. During the few days which were thus employed, the native kings were mustering all their own strength, and hiring reinforcements from more distant tribes, for a new attack. Of their proceedings, Mr. A. had constant intelligence, and the settlers were constantly employed in making their defences more complete. On the evening of November 28th, information was received “ that the attack was to be renewed with double the number of warriors employed on the 11th, at day-light on the following morning.”

“ The Agent for the first time spent the whole night at the different posts ; and had the satisfaction to perceive every man attentive to his duty, and every thing connected with the defence in a state of the most perfect preparation. The wood had been cleared for a considerable space about the town. The enemy in order to approach within musket shot of the works, was obliged to place himself unsheltered, in the open field ; and could advance upon no

point which was not exposed to the cross-fire of two or more of the posts."

The circumstance that an English vessel was lying off the cape, induced the native leaders to defer the battle till the following day.

"November 30th was spent by the people in the order of action, as it was known that the enemy in the neighborhood were in the actual observation of all that passed within the lines. No pickets could be safely trusted during the ensuing night without the enclosure; but the men attached to the different stations were ranged along the stockade at five yards distance from each other, with orders to repair to their guns on the moment the alarm was given. The Agent, spent with the fatigue of waking two successive nights, had reclined at thirty minutes past four upon the light arms which he carried, when the onset was made. The works were attacked at the same moment on nearly opposite sides. The enemy's western division had made their way along the muddy margin of the river, under the protection of the bank, to the northwestern angle of the palisade; when, on rising the bank so as to become visible from the western post, they had opened upon it a sudden and brisk fire; which was promptly and very steadily returned by the iron gun, supported by the reserve field piece from the center. The assailants were repulsed with considerable loss. Ten minutes afterwards they renewed the onset, and forcing their way higher up the bank than before, contended with greater obstinacy, and suffered still more severely. A third attempt was made to carry this post; but with the same ill success.

"On the opposite quarter the assault had commenced at the same moment, with still greater vigor. A large body had concealed themselves under a precipitous ledge of rocks forty yards distant; whence they crept nearly concealed from view, within the same number of feet of the station; when they suddenly rose, delivered their fire, and rushed forward with the utmost fury. At this moment the two gun battery was unmasked, and opened upon them with immediate effect. After a very few discharges, the body of the enemy having thrown themselves flat upon the earth, disappeared behind the rocks. Their marksmen had taken their stations behind projecting rocks, fallen trees, and large ant-hills, and still kept up a constant and well directed fire; under the cover of which the

main body rallied and returned to the attack not less than four times; and were as often repulsed by the well directed fire of the large guns: which was purposely reserved for those occasions.

“The Agent at this moment perceiving the enemy in motion towards the right, under cover of a small eminence which favored their design, proceeded to the southern post, which had not yet been engaged, and ordered it to open upon them the moment their movement brought them within the range of its guns. The order was punctually obeyed; which exposed a large number of the assailants to a galling cannonade both in front and flank, in a situation where their own arms could prove of no effectual service to them. The assault on the opposite side of the town had been already repulsed; and the signal for a general retreat immediately followed.”

“The attack upon the eastern post, was prolonged ninety minutes; and of the two, was much the most obstinate and bloody. Three of the men serving at the guns of that station, Gardiner, Crook, and Tines, were very badly, the last mortally, wounded. The Agent received three bullets through his clothes, but providentially escaped unhurt. As the natives in close action load their muskets (which are of the largest caliber) with copper and iron slugs, often to the enormous measure of twelve inches, their fire is commonly very destructive. In this conflict of scarcely an hour and a half, the quantity of shot lodged in the paling, and actually thrown within the lines, is altogether incredible; and that it took effect in so few cases can only be regarded as the effect of the special guardianship of Divine Providence.”



B.

A memoir of the life of Mr. Ashmun, is expected, from one well fitted for the work. A few facts and dates will here be subjoined.

He was born at Champlain, Clinton county, New York, in April, 1794. From childhood he exhibited an ardent thirst for knowledge; and many of the hours which he could redeem from labor were spent in study.

At the age of about fifteen, he became the subject of decided and permanent religious impressions. He had previously imbibed some sceptical notions, and had indulged a strong dislike to the doctrines and duties of the gospel. But that grace of God which arrested Saul, and made the persecutor an apostle, had also ordained him a chosen vessel to himself, to bear his name before the Gentiles. After a severe inward conflict, he found peace in submitting to the Saviour and believing the promises of God.

His attention was immediately turned toward the gospel ministry. He entered college at Middlebury. While there his studies were interrupted by ill health; and he seemed at one time to be sinking under a pulmonary consumption. He graduated at the university of Vermont, in 1816.

Not long afterwards, he was employed as a teacher in the Literary and Theological Institution, then recently commenced at Bangor, in Maine. He was licensed to preach. Afterwards he resided at the city of Washington, where at one time he assisted in editing the "Theological Repertory," an able and liberal religious miscellany, conducted by individuals of the Episcopal church. The task of compiling a memoir of the Rev. Samuel Bacon, who had died in Africa while in the service of the Colonization Society, was entrusted to him; and the volume which he published, while it is a valuable memorial of a truly excellent man, is honorable to the literary character and the christian feelings of its author. Becoming deeply interested in the cause of Africa, he issued the prospectus, and published a few numbers of a Journal devoted to that cause. Public feeling was not then prepared to sustain him in the undertaking, and the work was discontinued.

In 1822, the Managers of the Colonization Society, were preparing to send out a small reinforcement, and the Navy Department was making arrangements to send back to their own country, a few native Africans taken from a slave ship. A vessel was chartered by the government and the society, and Mr. Ashmun was appointed to take charge of the expedition, with authority to act as Agent for both, in case he should find no Agent at the colony. He went expecting to return by the same vessel. The sequel the reader knows.

While he resided in Africa, his health, except as he suffered from special exposure or fatigue, was equal at least, to what it had been

for some years previous. In the month of January last, a period of long and exhausting effort during the heavy rains, made him unfit for business ; and on the 26th of March he embarked for his native country, hardly expecting to survive the passage. The vessel after a long voyage touched at St. Bartholomews ; and as the continuance of his voyage at that time, threatened certain and speedy death, he was left behind. In the course of a few weeks, the violence of his disease seemed abating ; and he ventured to embark on board a vessel bound for New Haven, where he arrived on the 10th of August. From that time his descent to the grave was rapid. The best medical skill was called to his assistance, but in vain. His disease had become inveterate.

The result he anticipated with great composure. The first time that I saw him he told me, "I have come here to die. It is hard to be broken down by the slow progress of disease. I wish to be submissive. My sins, my sins ; they seem to shut me out from that comfort which I wish to enjoy." A day or two afterwards, advert- ing to the same subject, he said, "I have been praying for light, and a little light has come, cheering and refreshing beyond expression." From that time, though I saw him daily, and though he often spoke of dying, I never knew him to intimate the least solicitude. Requesting the prayers of the congregation on the sabbath, he said, "I have a desire to recover, but I do not wish *that* to be the burthen of the prayer. Let it be that I may acquiesce entirely in the will of God, and may have communion with God. I wish the colony to be remembered." Here he burst into tears like a child. "Excuse my weakness," said he, "there are many good people there, and they are so dear that when I think of seeing them no more, my feelings are too strong." The kindness, patience, and piety of his disposition made a deep impression on all his attendants ; and when he died, those who had so lately been strangers to him, wept as if he had been their early friend.

He died, falling asleep as it were in a moment, reason, memory, speech, and every faculty holding out to the last, on Monday, August 25th, at 12 in the evening.

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